

Road to Purpose by ggypt

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Summary:

When some weird, but not Hawkins Lab weird, makes itself known in town, Nancy can't keep herself away from it. Against everything that she's been conditioned by her parents, Nancy starts to transform into a hunter

Post Season 1 AU

Road to Purpose

Author's Note:

So, just to talk a little bit sort of academically about this piece, this is my attempt to do a story that commits to the arc that Nancy was going through during season 1 and move her away from the 80s girlfriend role into more of the self sufficient action heroine role. Pairings aren't for sure down yet, there are two lines I might go, and I figure I'll let the writing tell me which one to go down. Rating may go up deeper into the story. Anyways, hope you enjoy.

Nancy paced back and forth across the front of her car. She wanted to leave all of this behind, she really did, but a new set of bodies mounted up, and the adrenaline called to her once again. She survived once, and as much as she hated to admit it, she had enjoyed the fight. It wasn't something that girls were supposed to revel in, but there it was, in her blood, calling to her.

That desire, that shame, it brought her here, to the new shop in town. It's a small shop, inconspicuously set in a strip mall, nothing screaming out that it was anything more special than any of the other mom and pop shops beside it. The shop itself claimed to sell mystic brews and knowledge of magic. Its claims seeped in a sense of Wiccan power that had caused all sorts of worried whispers when it originally opened.

Nancy originally made her way here in the hopes that their claims of knowledge of those things that aren't normally known were true. Now that she stood mere feet from the door, she was caught by the implication a step inside would mean, what path it would set her towards.

It took a couple minutes of pacing, and of getting odd looks from the people visiting the other shops in the strip mall. Finally, with a deep breath, Nancy walked forward, opened the door and stepped inside. A little bell attached to the door signaled her arrival and Nancy knew at this point she could come back.

The shop has an atmosphere to it. It was darkly lit, just enough were it created a mood but not a hinderance to look at the products. The shelves were covered in all sorts of roots and objects, the likes that Nancy had never encounter before. The register was visible on the far side of the room, framed by the stocked shelves.

Behind the counter stood a young woman, who looked just about Nancy's age, with a striking mane of black hair. The young woman perked up at the sound of the bell and gave a small smile to Nancy. Nancy couldn't help but respond with a small smile of her own. Nancy turns back to the shelves, entranced by the many things that she had never even heard of before. "If you need any help, let me know," the woman behind the counter says.

Nancy absentmindedly nodded her head as she slowly made her way through the rows, taking in the all the different objects. It was a slow trek to the front of the store, filled with wonder. Nancy paused just short of the counter, taking a second to take a breath before assertively stepping in front of the young attendant. "Would you have a Bestiary?" Nancy asked, the term new to her lips, a vague reference that she had found of something that might be useful.

The attendant raised her eyebrow at the question. "Now why would you be looking for something like that?" she asked, a smirk played across her face.

The rebuttal caught Nancy. Silence fell for a second, before Nancy managed to form her own rebuttal, "I am attempting to identify something."

More questions played in the eyes of the attendant, but instead of asking, she gave Nancy a small smile before slipping into the back of the shop. It was only a couple moments before the attendant appeared again, this time holding a dusty looking tome. "This should have the information you are looking for," the attendant says.

Nancy responded with a smile, thanking the attendant and paying for the book. "It's nice to have a customer who's interested in this stuff beyond the surface benefits," The attendant responded with, "The name's Abigail, by the way. I hope to see you return soon."

“We shall see,” Nancy states as she makes her way towards the exit.

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Nancy had quickly become used to the gore that came with tracking the weird. The sight of blood didn’t bother her anymore, or the smell of decay. She figured it might be another sign from god that this might be something she was meant to do. It was a list that she really didn’t want to see getting any longer, as she might actually have to consider it legitimately.

“What are you doing here Nancy?” Hooper said, startling her out of her thoughts.

“Investigating,” was the simple response that Nancy gives, going back to observing the torn up remains of a cow.

“Why would you want to investigate this stuff,” Hooper says as he waves his hand at the corpse.

“It’s weird,” Nancy once again gave a simple response.

“This has nothing to do with Hawkins Lab, so you don’t have to worry about it, okay,” Hooper tried to reassure.

“Just because it isn’t Hawkin’s weird, doesn’t mean it’s not weird. There’s a lot of weird out there in the world that this could be,” Nancy states as she holds up the book in her hand.

Hooper only let out an exacerbated sigh before moving to crouch next to Nancy, “So, if you think this is another type of weird, what type of weird do you think it is?”

“I’m not 100% sure. I’m not all the way through this yet,” Nancy starts, holding up the book with her finger holding it open at the point where she had read to, “There are already a number of things that this could be indicative of. There is a surprising amount of weird out there.”

“That certainly doesn’t fill me with a happy feeling,” Hooper says with a shake of his head.

"It's not the whole book, so that's something," Nancy quipped back.

Hooper just responded with a grim smile. "The other boys are on their way, can't have you here when they get here," Hooper stated, tugging on the crouching girl's shoulder. "Come on."

Nancy let out a sigh before getting up and following Hooper back towards their cars. The walk was mostly quiet, only punctuated by the crunch of the ground below them. As they reached the parked cars, Hooper set a hand on Nancy's shoulder, "I want you in on this."

Nancy stops short at the comment. "I'm... I'm not sure," she responds quietly.

"If you aren't sure, why are you looking into this to begin with?" Hooper asks.

"I can't let it go. It just sits there, bug me at night, and I just can't let it go," Nancy responded, barley loud enough for Hooper to hear.

"Then what's bothering you dear, why don't you want to help?" Hooper asked.

"Last time I got involved, I barley made it out of there alive," Nancy starts with a small sniffle. "I was unprepared, and I barely got out of there."

"That book you got there," Hooper says, pointing at the book in question, "It's supposed to tell you everything you need to know. You won't be unprepared, and from what I heard, last time you came prepared, you came out on top."

Nancy slowly starts to smile as Hooper's comment continues. When he finished, Nancy speaks once again, "It wasn't that clean even when I had a plan."

"But you made it, and you'll make it again," Hooper says.

"I'm not strong..." Nancy starts.

Hooper quickly interrupts her, "You survived the upside down without a suit. You fought the Demogorgon twice. You are damn

strong where it counts. If you feel like you need to get physically stronger, you can do that, but you already have the strength that you can't train."

Nancy stands there for a moment after Hooper is done talking. "You really believe in me, don't you?" Nancy asks.

"Yeah, I do," Hooper responds simply.

"I'm in, what do you need from me," Nancy says with a renewed confidence.

"You finish that book up, and I'll get you everything we figure from this, and we'll go from there. Now get out of here before the other boys show up," Hooper says, clapping Nancy on the back.